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agricultural situation

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COAST-TO-COAST COUNT

C7Ag
Cap 4



needing to know just what the acreage-for-harvest prospects are for 1975 are the concerns about the availability of certain feed and food crops on the heels of short 1974 outputs, and the potential effect on farmers' prices for their products.

Livestock and poultry producers are interested in future grain supplies; grain farmers are anxious about potential price returns; and cotton growers are sensitive to their softening market situation. Foreign buyers are also eyeing the U.S. crop potential.

All this interest draws considerable attention to the SRS June Acreage Report, the first major indication of 1975 spring planted acres and acres for harvest.

The release is the outgrowth of a nationwide data collecting and estimating effort by SRS that gets underway in late May and early

COAST-TO-COAST COUNT

Spring might be identified as the mystery period in the development of a new crop season. A big piece of important information is yet to be plugged into the system: How many acres are farmers actually planting? How closely will they follow the planting intentions reported to SRS as early as January and March?

There can be some sharp contradictions between what farmers indicate they'll plant and what they really manage to get in the ground. Many factors influence these decisions.

For example, farmers a year ago were geared up to boost acreages of several crops but heavy spring rains washed out some of these plans. In other years, acreages may be altered because of economic conditions, labor supplies, government programs, or even the impact of the early season estimates of what producers say they'll plant.

Intensifying the importance of



June with personal interviews of some 70,000 farm operators. Information is also gathered through the mail from thousands of other producers.

The program of annually interviewing a cross section of farmers in all States, except Alaska and Hawaii, has been operating for nearly two decades. Each season focuses more importance on this data program because of larger and more specialized farms, and the need to develop more reliable estimates for the entire agricultural industry.

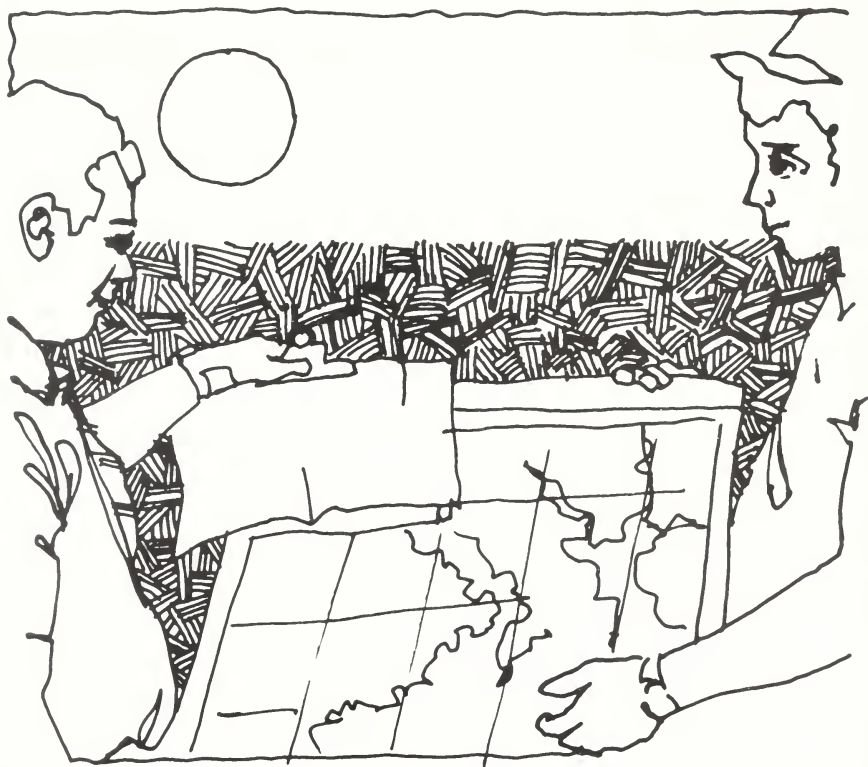
The interview survey—statisticians call it an enumerative survey because it collects complete data on crops, livestock, labor, and other agricultural activities from selected land segments—offers several advantages not available through the mail surveys alone.

The enumerative survey is based on probability sampling which means that the chance, or probability, of each farm or farmer being in the sample can be computed. This provides statisticians with the means of measuring the degree of precision for estimates.

For the June Enumerative Survey, the country is drawn off into individual land segments, each about 1 square mile in area with about two or three farm operations. Segments in the 11 Western States are somewhat larger in size.

Some 16,000 of these area segments form the survey sample and represent about 0.6 of 1 percent of the total land area in the 48 States.

A Corn Belt State has about 350 segments; Southern States about 425; and Texas and California, about 1,000 each.



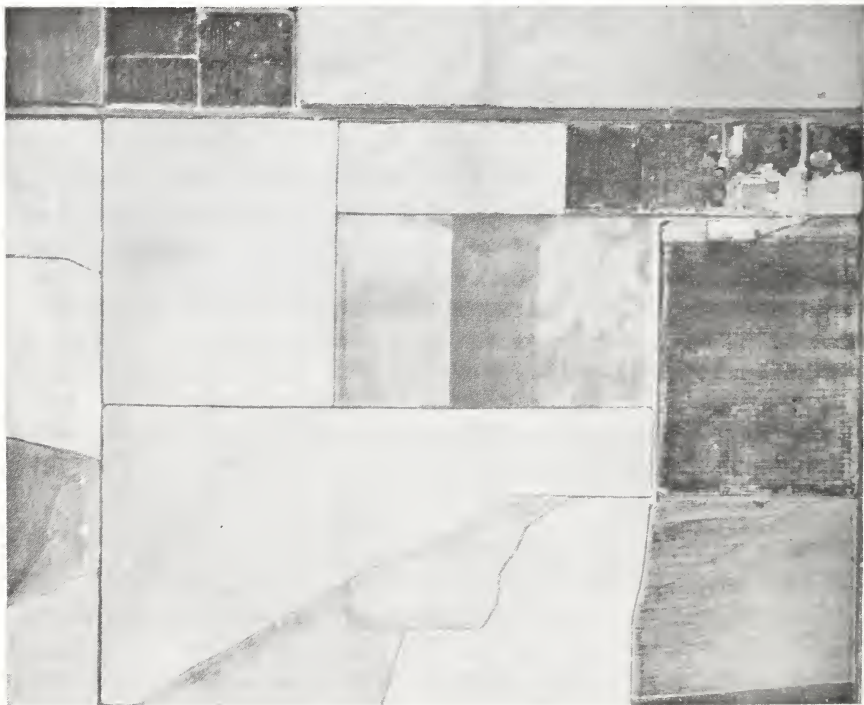
While the main emphasis of the survey is to gather data on crop acreages as a foundation for forecasting production, there are also special contacts made with over 9,000 livestock operators to ask the number of cattle, hogs, and sheep. This survey information is the primary indication for setting mid-year inventory numbers and pointing out the expected level of marketings during the second half of the year and early 1976.

The June Enumerative Survey also identifies fields for highly specialized in-the-field crop counts and measurements to develop yield indications of corn, cotton, wheat, and soybeans. In these objective yield surveys, information is gathered each month during the growing season from small randomly selected plots in the fields. Plants are counted and distances between rows measured to determine plant populations per acre, a factor in the yield forecasts.

Next, the enumerator counts such pertinent plant items as cotton blooms and bolls, soybean nodes and pods, wheat heads and spikelets, and ears of corn. These counts are related to the stage of crop development for a gauge of yield per plant.

Results from this work were particularly important indicators for monthly yield forecasts and production estimates during 1974. The wet spring, dry summer, and killing frosts of early fall made this information especially valuable in providing current, unbiased, and reliable indications of crop yields and production.

The June Enumerative Survey is a source of other important SRS data collection efforts. In December, a subsample of those farmers visited in June will be interviewed again to obtain indications on winter wheat and rye seedings, and cattle, hog, chicken, and sheep inventories, and pig and calf crops.



CROPS: A LOOK AT THE LEDGER

When the books closed on the 1974 crop season, total output was short of a year earlier. However, the value of the overall crop was well above any previous year.

Crop production stumbled last year because of yield slashes caused by poor weather through much of the planting, growing, and harvesting seasons.

The all-crops production index (1967=100) was 110 in 1974, off 9 points from the record set in 1973

and the lowest since the 101 of 1970.

The total value of the 117 commodities tracked by the Crop Reporting Board in 1974 was over \$61.3 billion, up about \$6.5 billion from 1973 and well above the 1972 tally of \$34.2 billion.

The estimated prices per unit for 1972 and 1973 listed in the table below are season averages received by farmers for all sales during the crop year. The prices for 1974 are preliminary.

PRODUCTION

Crop	Unit	1972	1973	1974
Corn	bil. bu.	5.57	5.65	4.65
Sorghum	mil. bu.	809	930	628
Winter wheat	bil. bu.	1.19	1.27	1.39
Rice	mil. cwt.	85	93	114
Soybeans	bil. bu.	1.27	1.55	1.23
Cotton	mil. bales	13.70	12.97	11.70
Potatoes	mil. cwt.	296	299	340
Hay	mil. ton	129	135	127
Sugarbeets	mil. ton	28	24	22
Sugarcane	mil. ton	28	26	26

PRICES

Average dollars per unit received by farmers

Crop	Unit	1972	1973	1974 ¹
Corn	bu.	1.57	2.55	3.51
Sorghum	bu.	1.37	2.15	3.05
Winter wheat	bu.	1.71	3.72	4.08
Rice	cwt.	6.73	13.78	10.78
Soybeans	bu.	4.37	5.68	7.69
Cotton	lb.	.273	.446	2.461
Potatoes	cwt.	3.01	4.92	4.35
Hay	ton	31.30	41.71	50.78
Sugarbeets	ton	16.00	29.70	58.70
Sugarcane	ton	11.70	20.82	56.50

¹Based on prices through December 1974 with an estimate for the remaining part of the market season.

²Average through December 1974.

SURVEYSCOPE

To give our readers a clearer picture of the vast scope of SRS activities, Agricultural Situation presents a series of articles on special surveys undertaken in various States. While these are not national surveys, they are important to the agriculture in individual States.

Kansans take their winter wheat crop seriously, and well they should. After all, it's a mainstay of this important farming State's agricultural industry.

Last year combines cleaned out 319 million bushels of wheat from Kansas' fields with a farm value of nearly \$1.3 billion.

A commodity this significant to the economy of a State is worth looking at closely and even with a critical eye. That's what is done several times each harvesting season. Called a wheat quality survey, it's conducted by the Kansas Crop and Livestock Reporting

Service working with the Kansas Department of Agriculture, and the Kansas Wheat Commission.

Ray Hancock, Statistician in Charge of the Kansas Crop and Livestock Reporting Service, points out that his State's hard red winter wheat has a worldwide market. The buyers, domestic and foreign, are concerned about the milling and baking characteristics of the wheat as determined by its protein and moisture content and test weight per bushel.

Hancock's staff and those from cooperating agencies worked with information from grain inspection



The Kansas hard red winter wheat crop, worth millions to the State's economy . . .

certificates for over 9,000 samples of wheat going through the major terminals at Hutchinson, Salina, Kansas City, and elsewhere in the State. Each sample represented wheat from a different railroad car.

A final summary indicated the average protein content of the 1974 crop was slightly better than in 1973—11.3 percent against 11.0 percent. The moisture content held steady for both years at 11.5 percent. The test weight declined from 62.2 pounds per bushel in 1973 to 61.3 pounds last year.

In conjunction with the regular wheat quality survey last year, a special research project was launched to develop a detailed profile relating wheat varieties and regions of production within the State to milling and baking factors.

Representatives from Hancock's office collected samples of wheat from randomly selected fields scattered across the State. This was done as part of the nationwide objective yield

conducted by SRS during the growing season for wheat, corn, cotton, and soybeans. In this way, SRS gathers unbiased yield indications to supplement information supplied in surveys of producers.

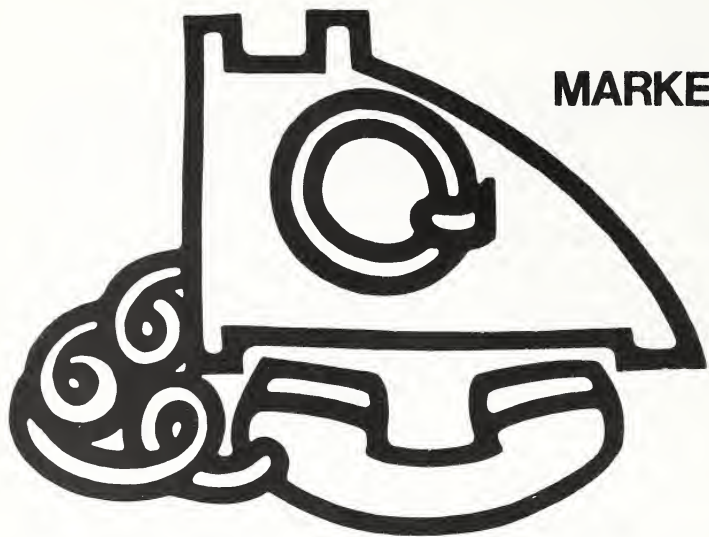
The harvested samples were brought to the Kansas Crop and Livestock Reporting Service's Topeka office for threshing, a check of moisture content, and estimate of potential yield per acre.

The grain was then turned over to the Kansas State University Department of Grain Science and Industry for laboratory analysis which included determining test weight, protein content, kernel size and weight per 1,000 kernels, and potential flour yield. The final test was to bake a small loaf of bread.

Hancock said the wheat quality survey information is one of the most useful tools available to farmers in evaluating their crop and identifying possible changes for cultural practices.



... is inspected at rail terminals to determine protein, moisture, and test weight.



MARKET NEWS ON THE LINE

Market news is just a dial away—and available 24 hours a day—for many buyers and sellers of farm products. Below are numbers of automatic telephone answering devices and when they're in operation. Unless otherwise stated numbers are in operation year-round. Numbers in parentheses refer to telephone area codes.

ALABAMA

Foley: Potatoes—May and June (205) 943-5138.

Montgomery: Livestock and meat (205) 281-7060. (Between 5 p.m. and 8 a.m., dial (800) 392-5804 for reports on cattle or (800) 392-5801 for reports on hogs. Toll-free numbers in Alabama only.)

Rainville: Potatoes—June and July (205) 638-2028.

ARIZONA

Nogales: Fruits and vegetables—December through June (602) 287-5022.

Phoenix: Lettuce, grapes, melons, and other vegetables (602) 279-4134, 4135, and 4136. Livestock and meat (602) 275-7972.

Yuma: Lettuce—November through April. Melons—June and July (602) 782-9597, 9598.

ARKANSAS

Ft. Smith: Livestock and meat (918) 875-3892.

Little Rock: Livestock and meat (501) 664-8790.

CALIFORNIA

Bakersfield: Potatoes, grapes, melons—May through July (805) 323-0727.

Bell: Livestock and meat (213) 268-8020.

Blythe: Lettuce—November through April (714) 922-7151.

Coachella: Grapes—May and June (714) 398-5993.

El Centro: Lettuce, melons, and other vegetables—December through July (714) 352-5130, 5131. Livestock and meat (714) 352-8160.

Fresno: Cotton—October through December (209) 486-0511. Grapes, deciduous fruits (209) 233-0341. Melons—July through September (209) 264-1546.

Los Angeles: Broilers, turkeys, and eggs (213) 622-0784. Fruits (213) 622-3922. Hay for Los Angeles and Chino Valley; wheat, corn, oats, grain sorghum, barley, and soybean meal for Los Angeles area (213) 622-7822. Vegetables (213) 622-3973.

Sacramento: Various fruits—May through October (916) 442-5883.

Salinas: Lettuce and other vegetables (408) 449-7221, 7222.
 Santa Maria: Vegetables—April through November (805) 925-0091.
 San Francisco: Wine grapes—September through November (415) 397-6513.
 Stockton: Livestock and meat (209) 466-3085.
 Visalia: Livestock and meat (209) 733-3750.
COLORADO
 Brush: Livestock and meat (303) 842-2249.
 Greeley: Livestock and meat (303) 353-5170.
 Monte Vista: Potatoes—September through May (303) 852-2568.
 Palisade: Peaches—August and September (303) 464-7728.
 Sterling: Livestock and meat (303) 522-4772.
DELAWARE
 Dover: Potatoes—July through October (302) 697-2345.
FLORIDA
 Belle Glade: Vegetables—November through May (305) 996-8540.
 Bonifay: Watermelons—June and July. (Ask operator for “Market News.”)
 Florida City: Avocados, mangoes, and limes—July through September (305) 248-7331. Tomatoes—November through September (305) 248-7611.
 Fort Myers: Vegetables—December through May (813) 332-2114.
 Fort Pierce: Citrus and tomatoes—October through May. (Ask operator for “Market News.”)
 Hastings: Cabbage—January through May (904) 692-2211.
 Immokalee: Vegetables, tomatoes—December through May (813) 657-2793.
 Kissimmee: Livestock and meat (305) 846-6328.
 Pompano Beach: Vegetables—October through May (305) 522-4343.
 Trenton: Watermelons—June. (Ask operator for “Market News.”)
GEORGIA
 Atlanta: Broilers (404) 526-3073. Eggs (404) 526-3075.
 Macon: Livestock and meat (912) 743-1903 or 746-1559.
 Thomasville: Livestock and meat (912) 226-9511.
 Valdosta: Tobacco—July through September (912) 244-9532.
HAWAII
 Honolulu: Fruits, vegetables, ornamentals—Mon., Wed., Fri. (808) 949-8801.
IDAHO
 Burley: Livestock and meat (208) 678-2424.
 Fruitland: Onions, apples—August through April (208) 452-3722.
 Idaho Falls: Potatoes, onions—September through June (208) 522-3979.
 Pocatello: Livestock and meat (208) 232-7500.
ILLINOIS
 Chicago: Broilers and turkeys (312) 922-2997. Eggs (312) 922-2030. Livestock and meat (312) 922-1253.
 Joliet: Livestock and meat (815) 423-5026.
 National Stock Yards: Livestock and meat (618) 874-1900.
 Peoria: Livestock and meat (309) 676-8811.
 Springfield: Corn, wheat, soybeans, and oats for Illinois; Chicago futures (217) 525-2055. Livestock and meat (217) 525-4019.
INDIANA
 Evansville: Livestock and meat (812) 464-5206.
 Indianapolis: Livestock and meat (800) 382-1567. (Toll-free number in Indiana only.)
IOWA
 Ames: Livestock and meat (515) 294-6899 or 294-4347.
 Des Moines: Cash prices and trend for corn and soybeans in six Iowa districts; Chicago futures (515) 281-3755. Livestock and meat (515) 282-6870.

Durant: Livestock and meat (319) 785-6032.
 Sioux City: Livestock and meat (712) 252-2100.
KANSAS
 Dodge City: Livestock and meat (316) 225-1311.
 Wichita: Livestock and meat (316) 267-7992.
KENTUCKY
 Frankfort: Livestock and meat (502) 564-4958.
 Lexington: Tobacco—November through February (606) 259-0918.
 Louisville: Livestock and meat, wheat, yellow and white corn, soybeans,
 oats, barley for Kentucky; Chicago futures (502) 584-6617.
LOUISIANA
 Baton Rouge: Corn, soybeans for export at Gulf ports, poultry, eggs,
 and fruits and vegetables (504) 389-5276.
MAINE
 Presque Isle: Potatoes—October through May (207) 764-3411.
MICHIGAN
 Bay City: Potatoes—August through March (517) 893-0831.
 Benton Harbor: Fruits, vegetables—June through April (616) 925-1096.
 Lansing: Livestock and meat (517) 373-6330.
MINNESOTA
 South St. Paul: Livestock and meat (612) 451-3692.
MISSOURI
 Kansas City: Livestock and meat (816) 421-7694.
 Mexico: Livestock and meat (314) 581-6250.
 South St. Joseph: Livestock and meat (816) 238-1203.
 St. Louis: Broilers and eggs (314) 621-8447.
NEBRASKA (All livestock and meat)
 Aurora (402) 694-3183. Grand Island (308) 384-5101.
 Beatrice (402) 223-5231. Holdredge (308) 995-4497.
 Columbus (402) 564-2778. Kearney (308) 237-5908.
 David City (402) 367-4221. Omaha (402) 731-4481 or 731-5355.
 Exeter (402) 266-5461. Tekamah (402) 374-1667.
 Fremont (402) 721-4100. York (402) 362-6623.
NEW JERSEY
 Bridgeton: Fruits and vegetables (609) 455-2510.
 Hightstown: Fruits and vegetables—May through January (609) 448-1482.
 Newark: Broilers and turkeys (201) 621-6619. Eggs (201) 645-3369.
NEW MEXICO
 Las Cruces: Lettuce—October and November, May and June. Onions—May
 and June (505) 646-4928.
NEW YORK
 Florida: Vegetables—June through March (914) 651-4626.
 Riverhead: Potatoes, cabbage, cauliflower—August through March
 (516) 727-6884.
NORTH CAROLINA
 Elizabeth City: Potatoes—June and July (919) 335-0737.
 Raleigh: Tobacco—July through December (919) 775-4784.
NORTH DAKOTA
 Grand Forks: Potatoes—October through May (701) 772-9660.
 West Fargo: Livestock and meat (701) 237-3426.
OHIO
 Bucyrus: Livestock and meat (419) 562-5489.
 Chillicothe: Livestock and meat (614) 772-1431.

Cincinnati: Fruits and vegetables (513) 621-2542.
 Columbus: Livestock and meat (614) 466-6484.
 London: Livestock and meat (614) 852-2311.
 Washington Court House: Livestock and meat (614) 335-5100.
OKLAHOMA
 Oklahoma City: Livestock and meat (405) 236-5491.
 Purcell: Livestock and meat (405) 527-3995.
 Tulsa: Livestock and meat (918) 245-7134.
OREGON
 Merrill: Potatoes—October through May (503) 798-5733.
 Portland: Corn, wheat, oats, barley, soybeans, and sorghum (503)
 221-2022. Eggs (503) 221-2350. Livestock and meat (503) 289-7220.
PENNSYLVANIA
 New Holland: Livestock and meat (717) 354-7288.
SOUTH CAROLINA
 Columbia: Livestock and meat (803) 779-7980.
 Florence: Tobacco—July through October (803) 699-7444.
SOUTH DAKOTA
 Rapid City: Livestock and meat (605) 342-1833.
 Sioux Falls: Livestock and meat (605) 336-7765.
TENNESSEE
 Jackson: Livestock and meat (901) 423-2080.
 Knoxville: Livestock and meat (615) 525-3211.
 Memphis: Livestock and meat (901) 774-6460.
 Nashville: Livestock and meat (615) 256-0596.
TEXAS
 Amarillo: Corn, wheat, soybeans, and sorghum for Texas High Plains and
 Houston cash grain (other areas seasonally); Kansas City and Chicago
 futures (806) 352-7411. Livestock and meat (806) 372-3494.
 Austin: Broilers and eggs. Pecans—October through December. Water-
 melons—June through August (512) 475-3845.
 Corpus Christi: Grains—same as Amarillo (512) 884-0911.
 Hereford: Vegetables and melons—July through October (806) 364-0129.
 Lubbock: Cotton (806) 763-7870. Grains—same as Amarillo (806) 763-3285.
 San Antonio: Livestock and meat (512) 223-4100. Terminal, fruits and
 vegetables (512) 222-9065.
 Sealy: Livestock and meat (713) 885-2050.
 Spur: Livestock and meat; cotton; and wheat, corn, soybeans, and sorghum
 south of line—Plainview to Muleshoe (806) 271-4505.
 Vernon: Grains—same as Amarillo (817) 552-7541.
VIRGINIA
 Onley: Corn, soybeans, barley, wheat and oats for Eastern Shore; Chicago
 futures. Potatoes—June through August (804) 787-3500.
 Warsaw: Wheat, corn, soybeans, barley and oats for Northern Neck, Middle
 Peninsula and Fredericksburg; Chicago futures (804) 333-5241.
WASHINGTON
 Sunnyside: Livestock and meat (509) 837-2412.
WEST VIRGINIA
 Charleston: Livestock and meat (304) 348-8883.
WISCONSIN
 Antigo: Potatoes—August through April (715) 623-2838.
 Stevens Point: Potatoes—August through March (715) 341-6463.
WYOMING
 Cheyenne: Livestock and meat (307) 777-7628.

GINSENG: GOING PLACES

If costs are corralled and supplies remain adequate, the tiny U.S. ginseng industry could cash in on blossoming market opportunities at home and abroad for this multi-purpose herb.

Getting to the root of the matter, total U.S. ginseng exports rose 28 percent from about 151,000 pounds in 1960-62 valued at \$2.7 million to nearly 193,000 pounds in 1972-73 worth \$8.9 million.

Biggest overseas markets for American ginseng are in the Far East. In 1973, Hong Kong took 94 percent of the U.S. exports, with 4 percent going to Singapore, 1 percent to Taiwan, and 1 percent to other countries.

Looking ahead, USDA economists expect U.S. export potential for what many claim as a medical cure-all to increase at a rate of 3 percent annually, reaching 250,000 pounds by 1980.

However, the United States will face stiff competition for ginseng-buying dollars in the Far Eastern market. Both Japan and South Korea are big sellers in Hong Kong, and at lower prices.

In 1973, U.S. ginseng export prices hit nearly \$50 per pound, compared to Japan's \$24.74, and South Korea's \$35.52. The U.S. price increased almost \$11 per pound from 1972 to 1973.

While no official statistics are kept on ginseng production, USDA estimates roughly 95 percent of the U.S. crop is exported. On this basis, domestic production of crude ginseng root jumped from 160,000 pounds during 1960-62 to around 200,000 during 1971-73.

Commercial cultivation is found mainly in areas of the Eastern United States where the herb grows naturally.

In 1954, the last time the Census of Agriculture asked about ginseng,

the five reporting farms indicated a total of 21 acres yielding 4,219 pounds per acre.

Technological advances designed to increase ginseng production with greater efficiency at less cost would allow the United States to match growing demands both domestically and overseas for this popular root.

FABRIC FAVORITES

Easy-care fabric features are uppermost in mothers' minds when shopping for their children's lightweight clothing.

Interviews with over 2,000 mothers participating in a recent USDA study revealed their favorite choices for children's wardrobes included garments that are machine washable, permanently pressed, hold their shape, and feel comfortable.

While mothers prefer a blend of cotton and polyester fabrics for their children's daytime outerwear, they like all-cotton for nightwear because it is cool, absorbent, soft, and durable.

The study also showed a growing concern by mothers about the relative safety of both manmade and natural fibers used in children's apparel.

In fact, more than three-fourths of those interviewed were very interested in having children's clothing treated with flame-retardant chemicals, and were even willing to pay extra for this added safety feature.

A majority of mothers indicated that all clothing labels do not show the kinds of information they are most interested in.

When questioned about their awareness and use of specific fibers in children's clothing, the mothers most often cited cotton, polyester, cotton-polyester blends, wool, and nylon.

Briefings

RECENT REPORTS BY USDA OF ECONOMIC, MARKETING, AND RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING FARMERS.

PENCHANT FOR MEAT . . . Demand for red meat continued unchecked last year as consumers bought a lot more than in 1973 and spent a record amount on it. Red meat consumption penciled out to 187 pounds a person—third largest on record and 11 pounds over the year-earlier level. Meat proved a relative bargain in 1974, with prices up only 2% from 1973—compared with an 11% hike for consumer prices in general.

UP IN SMOKES . . . If USDA economists are right, cigarette use in 1985 will at least match 1974's rate of 211 packs per adult—second only to the 217 packs smoked in 1963. Based on use rates last year and with more smokers, it would take 11% more tobacco to meet demands. But if concern about smoking and health trails off, per capita use could shoot up 10% by 1985, which means we'll have to produce 20% more tobacco to meet smokers' needs.

SEEDY STORY . . . Practical facts about the seeds of some 800 species of trees and shrubs—how to gather, store and protect, when and where to plant. They're all in *Seeds of Woody Plants in the United States*, the first Government-issued reference book on the subject in more than 25 years. The 883-page handbook contains general information on working with seeds, as well as detailed data on species, seed extraction, and other information useful to growers and marketers. Also included are photos for identifying seeds and fruits. *Seeds of Woody Plants in the United States* (Agriculture Handbook No. 450) is for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Price is \$13.50.

ON THE MARKET . . . Setting records is getting to be a habit in the commodities futures market. Volume traded in 1974 climbed 4% to 19.3 million contracts—a new high for the sixth straight year. While volume of transactions shattered records, their value rose even more sharply to

\$388 billion—up nearly 18% from 1973 and double the 1972 figure. Higher prices for a number of major commodities accounted for a bigger value gain than volume increase. Corn was the most actively traded commodity with some 4.8 million transactions—roughly 16% over 1973. Wheat ranked second in overall volume with 3.1 million issues changing hands. Grain sorghum fared less well with 1,356 transactions, almost 1,000 fewer than a year earlier. Trading in soybean futures slipped for the second straight year—from 2.8 to 2.6 million contracts.

RICE RECORD . . . Bad weather may have ravaged some U.S. grain crops in 1974 but rice came up a winner, with production climbing to a record-shattering 114 million cwt. Encouraged by strong prices and favorable weather early last year, farmers sharply expanded plantings. Yields improved considerably too, but still failed to match the highs of 1970-72. Current supplies for 1974/75 total 122 million cwt.—yet another record.

OF WAGES AND WORKERS . . . As of January 1, U.S. farm wages were 9% more than a year earlier—and 5% more than October 1974. Hourly wage rates without room or board averaged \$2.39, up from \$2.17 in January 1974. The farm work force, however, remained virtually unchanged from the previous year, with the 1974 annual average—about 4.3 million workers—only 1% smaller than in 1973.

TIME SHIFT . . . Farm Labor Reports will be released less frequently, but the estimates should be more useful. In a move to improve data collection—and make the reports more accurate—USDA statisticians have shifted to a quarterly program. Data are now collected by mail, telephone, and personal interviews with a scientifically selected sample of farm operators and employers. The quarterly Farm Labor Report made its debut in late February, and subsequent issues will appear in the last weeks of May, August, and November.

WHAT'S THE ANGLE? . . . It's a new simplified system for identifying animals that might someday replace the thousands of confusing and often inscrutable brands now in use. Developed by a veterinarian with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, the Angle System is an easy-to-crack numeral code that uses only right angles and straight lines. If adopted internationally, the Angle System could be worth untold millions to the world's livestock producers. Besides that, it offers precision, is unalterable, can be readily adapted to computerized data retrieval systems, and provides strong visual communication.

Statistical Barometer

Item	1973	1974	1975—latest available data
Farms and Farmland:			
Number of farms (thousands)	2,844	2,830	¹ 2,819
Land in farms (mil. acres)	1,090	1,088	¹ 1,086
Average size of farms (acres)	383	384	¹ 385
Farm Employment and Wage Rates:			
Total employment (1967=100)	89	89	89 January
Family labor (1967=100)	86	86	86 January
Hired labor (1967=100)	89	92	100 January
Wage rates (1967=100)	157	176	² 189 January
Cattle Inventory, January 1:			
Cattle and calves (mil. head)	121.5	127.7	131.8
Cows and heifers that have calved (mil. head)	52.5	54.3	56.6
Beef cows (mil. head)	40.9	43.0	45.4
Milk cows (mil. head)	11.6	11.3	11.2
Heifers 500 pounds and over (mil. head)	17.7	19.0	19.5
For beef cow replacements (mil. head)	7.4	8.2	8.9
For milk cow replacements (mil. head)	3.9	3.9	4.1
Other heifers (mil. head)	6.4	6.8	6.5
Steers 500 pounds and over (mil. head)	16.6	17.8	16.4
Bulls 500 pounds and over (mil. head)	2.5	2.6	3.0
Heifers, steers, and bulls under 500 pounds (mil. head)	32.2	33.9	36.3
Prices:			
Wholesale price index, all commodities (1967=100)	134.7	160.1	171.8 January
Consumer price index, all items (1967=100)	133.1	147.7	156.1 January
All food (1967=100)	141.4	161.7	170.9 January
Farm Food Market Basket:³			
Retail cost (1967=100)	142	162	169 January
Farm value (1967=100)	167	178	173 January
Farmer's share of retail cost (percent)	46	43	40 January
Livestock and Poultry Inventory:			
Meat animals (1967=100)	109	114	116 January
Milk cattle (1967=100)	86	84	84 January
Poultry (1967=100)	93	95	87 January
Agricultural Trade:			
Agricultural exports (\$bil.)	17.7	22.0	¹ 2.5 January
Agricultural imports (\$bil.)	8.4	10.2	¹ .8 January

¹Preliminary.

²Seasonally adjusted.

³Average annual quantities per family and single person households bought by wage and clerical workers, 1960-61, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics figures.

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